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**BOSNIA-HERCEGOVINA:  
THE INTERNATIONAL RESPONSE**



**Vincent Rigby**  
**Political and Social Affairs Division**

**January 1994**



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## GLOSSARY

CSCE -	Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe
EC -	European Community
ECMM -	European Community Monitor Mission
FRY -	Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (proclaimed April 1992)
ICRC -	International Committee of the Red Cross
JNA -	Yugoslav Federal Army
NATO -	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
UN -	United Nations
UNHCR -	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNPROFOR -	United Nations Protection Force in the Former Yugoslavia
WEU -	Western European Union





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# Bosnia Update: Who Holds What







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## **BOSNIA-HERCEGOVINA: THE INTERNATIONAL RESPONSE**

### **INTRODUCTION**

The brutal fighting that has engulfed Bosnia-Herzegovina over the past two years has become a persistent reminder of the upheaval and chaos that dominates the post-Cold War world. The crumbling of the Soviet Empire and the resulting massive changes in the international security environment have created not the "New World Order" so many envisaged, but a rampant international disorder that shows few signs of correcting itself in the near future.

At the heart of this turmoil has been an enormous upsurge in ethnic, religious and communal violence. In eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union especially, peoples and governments, released from Communist rule and swept up by a tidal wave of democracy, have rushed to take up the banner of suppressed nationalism. In some cases, such as the break-up of Czechoslovakia, the results, while dramatic, have been peaceful. In others - Azerbaijan, Georgia, Yugoslavia - nationalist sentiment has exploded with violent intensity. Bloodshed on this scale has not been seen in Europe and its surrounding areas since the Second World War.

These conflicts were not unexpected. The collapse of vast empires invariably produces periods of intense nationalism and general political instability. Even in more remote trouble spots, such as Somalia and Angola, where nationalism has played a less prominent role, experts were not completely surprised by the outbreak of fighting. With the Cold War over, the immediate strategic importance of these regions has disappeared, and it could have been anticipated that tribal warlords would not miss the opportunity to hammer each other at will.

What has surprised many, however, is the protracted nature of these conflicts and the continued reluctance of the international community to intervene and throw its full weight behind efforts to stop the killing. Immediate strategic considerations aside, the end of the Cold

War was supposed to usher in a new era of collective security that would bring such wars to a rapid halt. The United Nations was expected to lead the way. After 45 years of American and Soviet jockeying in the Security Council, it was believed that the UN would finally fulfil the promise of its Charter and become more than a mere forum for discussion. Many cited the success of the Gulf War - mistakenly, it could be argued - as evidence that the UN was ready to become more assertive in matters of conflict resolution. It was predicted at the same time that regional organizations would grab on to the UN's coat-tails and play a more prominent role on the world stage. But this dream has turned into a nightmare. At almost every turn, the world has failed to respond effectively to international security threats. Even in those regions to which the UN and other organizations have belatedly turned their full attention, the results have been disappointing.

Nowhere has the failure of the global community been more apparent than in Bosnia,<sup>(1)</sup> where the fighting has now been raging for over 20 months. The UN and a host of regional organizations - the European Community (EC) and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) in particular - have repeatedly floundered in their efforts to end the carnage and produce a lasting political settlement acceptable to the rival ethnic factions. In short, Bosnia has become an unfortunate symbol of the failure of collective security in the post-Cold War world. It represents a microcosm of all the problems the UN and other security organizations face today as they attempt to deal with regional conflict: the rise of ethnic nationalism and the difficult questions surrounding the concept of sovereignty; the need for cooperation between international bodies; and the changing nature of outside intervention in war, as it evolves from traditional peacekeeping and humanitarian assistance to the protection of human rights and possible peace enforcement. The list is almost endless.

This paper will trace the international reaction to the war in Bosnia over the two years ending in December 1993. It will attempt to explain what went wrong for the international community and what lessons might be learned for the future.

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(1) In this paper, Bosnia will be used as the shortened form of Bosnia-Herzegovina.



## THE ROAD TO WAR

By the summer of 1991, the disintegration of Yugoslavia was well underway. The ethnic and religious cracks over which Marshal Tito had papered for 35 years were now chasms; old enmities dating from the Second World War and beyond had resurfaced and violence on a large scale was no longer avoidable. In June 1991 the republics of Croatia and Slovenia, tired of Serbian dominance and ready to assert their nationalism, declared their independence from the Yugoslav state. The federal army (JNA), controlled for the most part by Serbia, responded several days later by launching attacks against the breakaway republics. Fighting in Slovenia quickly subsided, but in Croatia, with its substantial Serb minority, the violence escalated. For the next six months the death toll mounted, as Catholic Croats and Orthodox Serbs reopened old wounds and discovered new depths to their hatred.

Early attempts by the international community, in particular the EC, to intervene in the conflict bore little fruit. It was not until the end of 1991 that the UN, unsure of the propriety of interfering in a sovereign state's internal disputes, finally arrived on the scene. Under the guidance of Cyrus Vance, former American Secretary of State and special envoy to the UN Secretary-General, a stable cease-fire was established in January 1992; at the same time, the EC, pressured by Germany and Austria, recognized Slovenia and Croatia as independent states. Preparations began in earnest for the deployment of a peacekeeping force in Croatia and by the spring of 1992 UN soldiers began to arrive in strength.

Although the conflict in Croatia was far from resolved - nearly two years later the threat of renewed war continues to loom large - some measure of stability had been introduced. International statesmen breathed a collective sigh of relief as the lid on the Balkan cauldron was apparently replaced. But such optimism proved to be misplaced. Within a few months fighting had erupted again, only this time in a new setting and with even greater brutality.

While Croatia and Serbia occupied centre stage throughout 1991, events were gradually unfolding in the other Yugoslav republics. The nationalist groundswell that was now carrying away Croatia and Slovenia had its most profound effect on Bosnia-Herzegovina. Comprising Muslims (44% of the republic's 4.5 million people in 1991), Serbs (31%) and

Croats (17%), Bosnia was the Balkans' most explosive powderkeg. Although some Bosnians lived in ethnically distinct areas, most did not; history and inter-marriage had created an ethnic jigsaw puzzle.

Early in the Yugoslav crisis the president of Bosnia, Alija Izetbegovic, a Muslim, had suggested drafting a new constitution for Yugoslavia which re-defined the powers of the six republics and eliminated the Communists as the major force in the government. But this was before the independence declarations of Croatia and Slovenia in June 1991. It had now become clear that a truncated Yugoslavia would be dominated by Serbia to an even greater extent than before. Bosnian independence, at least for the Croat and Muslim inhabitants, was increasingly seen as the only alternative to a Greater Serbia. In October 1991, Muslim and Croat deputies in the republic's National Assembly approved a memorandum stressing Bosnia's sovereignty.<sup>(2)</sup> But the Serbs had different ideas. In November they voted in favour of remaining part of Yugoslavia, fearing the kind of minority status that might result in a Muslim state if they were separated from the bulk of their fellow Serbs. They were spread over two-thirds of Bosnia and insisted that none of this land could leave Yugoslavia. For them, independence was a virtual declaration of war. Haris Silajdzic, Bosnia's foreign minister, responded that "if the Serbs want war, then they shall have it."<sup>(3)</sup> The lines were drawn.

## THE EC AND THE FAILURE OF PREVENTIVE DIPLOMACY

Despite its demonstrated shortcomings in Croatia, the European Community took the early lead in attempting to deal with the deteriorating situation in Bosnia. The EC still believed that it had a responsibility to look after its own backyard. Unfortunately, its efforts once again fell short; indeed, some experts have even suggested that the EC may well have pushed the republic over the brink into war.

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(2) While the Croats favoured Bosnian independence as a way of escaping Serb domination, they had no desire to be overshadowed by Muslims either. Subsequent events suggest that they saw this as a step to consolidating their territory in the west and forming a union with Croatia proper.

(3) See *The Economist*, 4 January 1992, p. 42.



When the Community was preparing to recognize Slovenia and Croatia in late 1991, it invited applications for independence from the other Yugoslav republics. The Bosnian government formally requested recognition on 20 December 1991, promising to establish autonomous territories in areas where members of a minority formed a local majority. This did little to appease Bosnia's Serbs, who responded to the president's application to the EC by proclaiming an independent Serbian republic on 9 January 1992.

The Badinter Arbitration Commission, part of the EC Peace Conference on Yugoslavia that had been set up in the summer of 1991, was now in a difficult position. Its task was to examine the applications of the republics for recognition, but in the case of Bosnia it ran a serious risk of stoking a smouldering fire. The Commission therefore adopted a delaying tactic, arguing that the popular will for an independent state had not been "clearly established" in Bosnia, but that an internationally supervised referendum, open to all citizens, might pave the way for EC recognition, provided respect for minority and ethnic rights was recognized. The Bosnian government wasted little time; on 25 January the National Assembly, boycotted by Serb parties, endorsed a referendum on the republic's sovereignty to be held at the end of February. The Portuguese presidency of the EC then laid the Community's cards on the table: it stated unequivocally that if the referendum was in favour of independence, the EC would recognize the republic.

This last move may well have sealed the fate of Bosnia. By agreeing to accept a decision for independence arrived at by a simple majority, rather than the agreement of the republic's constituent ethnic groups, it can be argued that the EC almost guaranteed violence and possibly violated international law.<sup>(4)</sup> There were inherent contradictions in the Community's policy. The Bosnian president represented a federal administrative structure in which all communities were represented, and yet the EC was encouraging him to make fundamental constitutional changes in the face of strong opposition from one of those communities. What

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(4) For commentary on the legality of the EC's decision to sponsor an independence referendum, see R.W. Tucker and D. Hendrickson, "America and Bosnia," *The National Interest*, Fall 1993, p. 16-17. See also Rosalyn Higgins, "The New United Nations and Former Yugoslavia," *International Affairs*, Vol. 69, (1993), No. 3, p. 468. Higgins argues that "contrary to popular belief, international law does not permit self-determination, by way of national secession, to national minorities. But, that apart, the use of force, with significant loss of life, to prevent secession is not acceptable either."

is more, the EC expected to play a special role in the recognition of Bosnia, and yet it had no intention of playing a role in protecting it as an independent entity.<sup>(5)</sup>

What was the EC's logic? The Community believed that recognition had ended the fighting in Croatia; it now theorized that it might prevent similar fighting from breaking out in Bosnia. Unfortunately, there was little evidence to support either case. Indeed, given the Serbs' vowed intention to oppose independence, there was much to suggest that recognition of Bosnia would precipitate violence. Certainly there was ample evidence to suggest that Bosnia was on the edge of disaster; indeed, an EC monitoring mission had been sent to the republic in early 1992 to assess the situation. Any chance that recognition might be withheld in order to buy time and negotiate a political settlement was now lost. Both Lord Carrington, the EC negotiator, and Cyrus Vance felt betrayed. They had lost their leverage.<sup>(6)</sup>

Despite backing itself into a corner, the EC continued to promote talks between the rival factions. At a conference held in Lisbon in February 1992, a compromise seemed to be reached: the Serbs agreed to respect the existing frontiers of Bosnia, while Izetbegovic promised to establish national territorial units within Bosnia - a Balkanized Switzerland, in effect. But the details of the plan, in particular the degree of autonomy such units would possess, were left up in the air and no final agreement was reached. The two sides were in reality far apart. The Serbs clearly hoped that the cantons would undermine the authority of the government in Sarajevo; Izetbegovic, on the other hand, expected the autonomous provinces to be weak and ineffective.

The referendum held in Bosnia-Herzegovina between 29 February and 1 March 1992 produced no surprises. Of the 63% of Bosnians who turned out to vote, 99% opted for full independence. As expected, the overwhelming majority of Serbs boycotted the referendum. Radovan Karadzic, leader of the Serb Democratic Party in Bosnia and a close ally of Serbian President Slobodan Milosevic, warned that "we are not going to accept an independent Bosnia-Herzegovina." Izetbegovic paid no heed, proclaiming the republic's independence from

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(5) See Jonathan Eyal, *Europe and Yugoslavia: Lessons from a Failure* (RUSI, 1993), p. 63-64, 76-77.

(6) See John Newhouse, "The Diplomatic Round: Dodging the Problem," *The New Yorker*, 24 August 1992, p. 66.



Yugoslavia on 3 March. In the meantime, violence between Serbs and Muslims began to escalate in Sarajevo, while clashes in other parts of the republic between Croats and Serbs were also reported.

The Muslims believed that the outcome of the referendum gave them the trump card in their drive for international recognition. However, the EC was hesitant; the Serbs' repeated declarations that war might just be around the corner could not be ignored. The Community now tried desperately to delay the inevitable. On 18 March Jose Cutileiro, a Portuguese diplomat who headed up the EC Conference on Bosnia-Herzegovina, brokered an agreement in Sarajevo which provided for three autonomous ethnic provinces, similar to those discussed in Lisbon. But the details, once again, were left vague. Since it was common knowledge that there were few regions in Bosnia exclusively inhabited by any one of the three communities, the chances of success seemed remote. As it was, both the Muslims and Serbs had serious reservations about the plan, the former because it might lead to the disintegration of the republic, the latter because there was no attempt to link the proposed national units to a confederal arrangement within Yugoslavia.<sup>(7)</sup> Despite EC pressure to sign the agreement as a condition for recognition, Izetbegovic publicly renounced the deal a short time later, possibly with American support.<sup>(8)</sup> The stakes were raised again when Karadzic announced the creation of a separate Bosnian Serb republic on 27 March. Further talks proved fruitless, and violence continued to spread. The countdown to war began.

The crisis came to a head with EC and American recognition of Bosnia on 7 April. Keeping in mind the chaotic conditions then prevailing in the republic, it was clear that the normal criteria for recognition did not exist. But the Community, under pressure from the United States (which until recently had refused to recognize "secessionist" republics), went ahead regardless. EC foreign ministers continued to believe, despite all evidence to the contrary, that

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(7) See C. Guicherd, "The Hour of Europe: Lessons from the Yugoslav Conflict," *The Fletcher Forum of World Affairs*, Summer 1993, p. 163.

(8) The position of the United States in the early stages of the Bosnian crisis is difficult to unravel. Tucker and Hendrickson (1993), p. 18-19, argue that the US was determined to preserve the territorial integrity of Bosnia at any price. See also Robin Alison Remington, "Bosnia: The Tangled Web," *Current History*, November 1993, p. 368.

recognition would stop the fighting and preserve a united country. There was also an implicit warning to the Serbs that they would not be allowed to pursue an aggressive course in Bosnia. Without the threat of force, however, such a warning rang hollow. All-out war had begun.

As the fighting spread, the EC tried desperately to bring the main factions back to the negotiating table. However, a truce brokered by Cutileiro on 12 April was effectively ignored; likewise, a cease-fire negotiated by Lord Carrington two weeks later and signed by Izetbegovic, Karadzic and Mate Boban of Bosnia's Croatian Democratic Community, was broken within hours. Thus began a pattern which was to be repeated again and again over the next 20 months, as the various forces on the ground could not be controlled by their respective politicians and senior military officials. As it stood, the Muslims, with EC recognition in their pockets, were not prepared to compromise, while the Serbs, feeling trapped in a newly created sovereign state, adopted the same position.

The war was soon raging out of control. On 2 May EC Foreign Ministers meeting in Portugal recognized the growing humanitarian crisis in Bosnia and insisted that the delivery of aid to the region be given top priority; however, on that same day a Belgian member of the EC Monitor Mission (ECMM) was killed and the operation was suspended in protest. The remaining ECMM members withdrew from Sarajevo on 12 May. EC ambassadors to Belgrade had already been withdrawn. The prospect of an early peace settlement negotiated by the European Community was rapidly fading.

## THE UNITED NATIONS: PRELIMINARY STEPS

The United Nations, meanwhile, was reluctant throughout the winter and spring of 1992 to make any precipitate moves in Bosnia, content to let the EC take the lead. But as EC mediation efforts continued to fail and the international media stepped up its coverage of the blockade of Sarajevo and the plight of Muslim refugees, the pressure to act increased. When EC foreign ministers suggested at their May meeting in Portugal that the Community work closely with the UN in any attempt to separate the warring parties, they may well have been trying to force the UN out of the shadows. After considerable hesitation, the United Nations finally stepped forward.



From the outset of the crisis, before large-scale fighting had even broken out, Bosnian officials encouraged the UN to step between the rival ethnic factions. When Cyrus Vance travelled to Sarajevo on 2 January 1992, the Bosnian president requested the "preventive deployment" of 2-3,000 UN peacekeepers to act as a deterrent to war. The response of Boutros Boutros-Ghali, the UN Secretary-General, was equivocal.<sup>(9)</sup> When the request was repeated by Bosnian foreign minister Silajdzic in Geneva in April, the Secretary-General was more explicit, emphasizing

the division of labour between the United Nations, whose peace-keeping mandate was limited to the situation in Croatia...and the peace-making role of the European Community (EC) as a whole. Concerning his specific request, I observed that it might be more appropriate for EC to expand its presence and activities in Bosnia-Herzegovina.<sup>(10)</sup>

Indeed, on 7 April the Security Council passed Resolution 749, appealing to all parties to cooperate with the efforts of the European Community to bring about a cease-fire and negotiate a political solution.<sup>(11)</sup>

Vance visited Bosnia again in mid-April but Boutros-Ghali maintained his position: "The sad fact is that the present conditions in Bosnia-Herzegovina make it impossible to define a workable concept for a United Nations peace-keeping operation." Moreover, as Vance pointed out, there were "limitations on human, material and financial resources" which stood in the way of such a deployment. Boutros-Ghali did make one concession. Although the original mandate of the UN Protection Force (UNPROFOR) related only to Croatia, it was envisaged that after the demilitarization of the UN Protected Areas, 100 UNPROFOR military observers would be

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(9) "Further Report of the Secretary-General...", S/23363, 5 January 1992, p. 7.

(10) "Report of the Secretary-General...", S/23836, 24 April 1992, p. 1. In this paper, "peace-making" refers to actions taken by the international community to bring the warring parties to an agreement, essentially through such peaceful means as those found in Chapter VI of the UN Charter. "Peace enforcement," on the other hand, refers to explicit military intervention aimed at imposing a peace settlement on the factions; this would include measures found in Chapter VII of the UN Charter. See *An Agenda for Peace*, S/24111, 17 June 1992.

(11) "The United Nations and the Situation in the Former Yugoslavia," Reference Paper, UN Department of Public Information, 7 May 1993, p. 6. Even after the UN began deploying peacekeepers in Sarajevo in June 1992, the EC remained responsible for peacemaking. This division of labour continued until the London Conference of August 1992.

redeployed to certain parts of Bosnia. The Secretary-General now agreed to send 41 military observers to Mostar and three other Bosnian municipalities before the end of April.<sup>(12)</sup>

Pressure for more decisive action by the UN was building. The war in Bosnia had added to an already massive humanitarian problem in the Balkans, as over a quarter of a million internally-displaced refugees had been spawned by the latest ethnic fighting. Several Balkan states asked the UN Security Council and the EC to adopt measures to safeguard humanitarian missions (most of which were being carried out by the International Committee of the Red Cross and the UN High Commissioner for Refugees) and "assure that humanitarian aid reaches the victims of the present armed conflict in Bosnia-Herzegovina."<sup>(13)</sup> In late April, the Security Council requested that the parties to the conflict not block the delivery of humanitarian aid, while at the same time demanding that all forms of interference from outside Bosnia cease immediately.<sup>(14)</sup>

Personnel from UNPROFOR headquarters, located in Sarajevo (against the better judgment of many senior UN officers),<sup>(15)</sup> did their best to ease some of the suffering. As the Secretary-General reported in late April, UNPROFOR was using "its good offices and its limited headquarters resources to provide humanitarian support to those in need as a result of the fighting in Sarajevo." This included transporting wounded civilians to hospitals and encouraging faction leaders to meet at UN headquarters to discuss the terms of EC cease-fires. While such activities did not strictly fall within UNPROFOR's mandate, the UN did not feel it could turn its back completely. However, as Boutros-Ghali pointed out, "the resources at UNPROFOR's disposal do not permit it to extend protection to all humanitarian operations in Bosnia-Herzegovina." He also stated that as the situation deteriorated, "the problems operating a headquarters in such an environment increase."<sup>(16)</sup>

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(12) "Report of the Secretary-General...", S/23836, 24 April 1992, p. 1, 5-6.

(13) M. Weller, "The International Response to the Dissolution of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia," *American Journal of International Law*, July 1992, p. 601.

(14) *Ibid.*, p. 600.

(15) See L. MacKenzie, *Peacekeeper: The Road to Sarajevo*, Vancouver, 1993, p. 106-7.

(16) "Further Report of the Secretary-General...", S/23844, 24 April 1992, p. 4, 6.



In early May, Marrack Goulding, Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, visited Bosnia to determine whether the situation had in any way improved. Izetbegovic continued to press for immediate UN intervention. His request for 10-15,000 troops, supported by air power, to "restore order," was out of the question. Boutros-Ghali pointed out that "given the intensity and scale of the fighting, such a concept would require many tens of thousands of troops equipped for potential combat with heavily armed and determined adversaries. I do not believe that an enforcement action of this kind is a practicable proposition." The Bosnian president tried a different tack, requesting a deployment of 6 - 7,000 men to protect aid convoys being harassed by the Serbs. Such a peacekeeping force, Goulding pointed out, even with "specific goals and a limited workable mandate," was no less problematic. Both Goulding and Lieutenant-General Satish Nambiar, commander of UNPROFOR, had told UNHCR after a similar request that unarmed UN peacekeepers would not be able to prevent trucks from being blocked and stolen; additional armed troops would be necessary to implement such a mandate, and the rules of engagement would have to be such as to allow them to open fire if attacked. Even then, Goulding stressed that "such a role, while consistent with customary United Nations peace-keeping practice, would require the existence of a prior agreement among the principal parties to the conflict. President Izetbegovic accepted that no such agreement was in sight." The Secretary-General agreed, and added that a "successful peace-keeping operation requires the parties to respect the United Nations, its personnel and its mandate...(F)or all their fair words, none of the parties can claim to satisfy this condition."<sup>(17)</sup> The most the UN would offer was the possibility of a role in resolving specific problems, such as the closure of Sarajevo airport.

In the meantime, the UN presence in Bosnia was shrinking. On 14 May, the 41 UN observers despatched to Bosnia only two weeks before were redeployed in Croatia after another increase in fighting. About two-thirds of UNPROFOR's headquarters personnel was also relocated from Sarajevo to Belgrade on 16-17 May. The skeleton staff left behind - approximately 100 military and civilian personnel - continued to perform humanitarian tasks in increasingly difficult circumstances.<sup>(18)</sup>

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(17) "Further Report of the Secretary-General...", S/23900, 12 May 1992.

(18) "Report of the Secretary-General...", S/24000, 26 May 1992, p. 3.

## SANCTIONS

As the EC struggled on the peacemaking front and the UN grappled with a possible peacekeeping role, the Serbs quickly gained the upper hand on the ground, making huge advances in eastern Bosnia and laying siege to Sarajevo. Serb attempts to create "ethnically pure" regions, in the words of Boutros-Ghali, were now attracting major international attention, as was the indiscriminate shelling of the Bosnian capital by Serb gunners lodged in the surrounding hills. With each new success, the flood of Muslim refugees increased. As the death toll began to mount, it was only a matter of time before the Serbs came to be seen as the clear aggressors in the conflict, although they insisted they were merely acting in self-defence. Lord Carrington's view early in the war, shared by others in the international community, that "everybody is to blame for what is happening in Sarajevo" was soon outpaced by the carefully-selected images appearing on television screens around the world.<sup>(19)</sup> The media, it seemed, did their best to reinforce a straight distinction between good and evil, despite the complexity of the war. By the middle of May, the EC was declaring that "by far the greatest share of the blame falls on the JNA and the authorities in Belgrade which are in control of the army, both directly and indirectly by supporting Serbian irregulars."<sup>(20)</sup>

Was Belgrade dreaming of a Greater Serbia? Serbia consistently denied that it was helping supply the Bosnian Serbs or that the JNA, which had regrouped in Bosnia after withdrawing from Croatia, was a participant in the fighting. But evidence to the contrary was difficult to ignore. In early May, after the EC warned of diplomatic isolation, the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (FRY), now consisting only of Serbia and Montenegro, ordered its citizens in the JNA to withdraw by the middle of the month. As if to remind Belgrade of its promise, the Security Council passed Resolution 752 on 15 May, demanding that all forms of interference from outside Bosnia cease immediately, and that foreign units be withdrawn, placed

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(19) "Fear and Loathing in the Balkans," *IISS Strategic Survey 1992-93*, p. 87. See also the comments of Cyrus Vance and UN Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali, "Report of the Secretary-General...", S/23836, 24 April 1992, p. 5.

(20) *Keesing's Record of World Events*, May 1992, p. 38918.



under the control of the Bosnian government or disbanded and disarmed.<sup>(21)</sup> However, since only a small portion of the estimated 100,000 JNA troops in Bosnia were FRY citizens, as many as 50,000 well-armed Bosnian Serb soldiers remained to fight.<sup>(22)</sup>

The emerging role of Serbia in the Bosnian conflict increased the demands for more assertive international action. Even the United States, which had remained quiet until now, suddenly stepped into the fray. Although, on 19 May, the State Department had intimated that there was no American security interest at stake in Bosnia, a week later Secretary of State James Baker was exhorting European leaders at a NATO meeting in Lisbon to do more about the problem. He even suggested that those arguing against outside military intervention were "on the wrong wavelength."<sup>(23)</sup> The Europeans were uncomfortable with such remarks, but they conceded that something had to be done. The French in particular were leaning towards a more active role, although they increasingly viewed the Bosnia crisis as too big for the EC to handle alone. For this reason, they wanted to see the UN become less hesitant.<sup>(24)</sup>

Both the UN and the EC agreed that one possible way to sever the link between Belgrade and the Bosnian Serbs was through the imposition of sanctions. But for much of May, the two bodies circled one another, each apparently wanting the other to make the first move. Finally, on 27 May, EC ambassadors, perhaps influenced by James Baker's comments, imposed a small package of sanctions against Serbia and Montenegro. They also froze all export-credit guarantees and suspended scientific and technical cooperation. However, they left oil off the list, encouraging the UN to take on that role.

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(21) It should be pointed out that Resolution 752 was aimed not only at Belgrade. There were also Croatian army units in Bosnia, and there was increasing evidence that Franjo Tudjman, president of Croatia, was determined to carve up Bosnia with his former enemy, President Milosevic of Serbia. They had apparently met on 6 May to this end. By July 1992 Bosnian Croats were claiming sovereignty over their territory in western Bosnia, and clashes with Muslims were to increase as the war dragged on.

(22) On the role of the JNA, see "Report of the Secretary-General...", S/24049, 30 May 1992. See also James Gow, "The Role of Coercion in the Yugoslav Crisis," *World Today*, November 1992, p. 192.

(23) *The Economist*, 30 May 1992, p. 12. Baker's comments may have been the first "official" reference to possible military intervention.

(24) It has been suggested that the French were also determined to give the UN a greater role so as to prevent the US from pushing NATO into the picture. If there was to be a military body involved, French president Francois Mitterand preferred that it be the Western European Union, the EC's embryonic defence arm. *The Economist*, 6 June 1992, p. 53.

The stage was now set for the UN's first decisive action on Bosnia. On 30 May the Security Council condemned authorities in Belgrade for failing to fulfil the requirements of Resolution 752 and imposed an embargo on Serbian and Montenegrin products as well as financial and economic contacts. Resolution 757 also suspended sports contacts and scientific, technical and cultural exchanges, and imposed an air embargo and the reduction of staff levels at Yugoslav diplomatic missions. Exempt from the sanctions were those items essential for humanitarian needs, such as foodstuffs and medical supplies.

Would the sanctions hurt Belgrade? Serbia was self-sufficient in food, rich in hydro-electric power and produced one-fifth of the oil it used.<sup>(25)</sup> What is more, it was clear from the outset that enforcing the ban would be difficult. While Arab oil producers were eager to punish the Serbs for ill-treatment of Muslims, other countries were more reluctant to act. Romania continued to ship oil to Serbia, while Greece freely participated in smuggling operations. Moreover, when the Western European Union and NATO began policing the Adriatic in July, they had no authority to stop vessels suspected of breaking sanctions. The UN and the EC made no mention of what they would do if Serbia defied the sanctions.

Even if sanctions were effective, would they in fact stop the fighting in Bosnia? The republic had been the centre of Yugoslavia's arms industry, which meant that plenty of weapons and ammunition were available to keep both sides fighting for some time. There was also no guarantee that, should Milosevic cave in to pressure and demand that the Bosnian Serbs pull back, the latter would necessarily do so. No one knew for certain how much leverage the Serbian president had with Karadzic and the other Serb leaders in Bosnia. Most experts seemed to believe that sanctions alone would never stop the fighting.

## THE DEPLOYMENT OF UN PEACEKEEPERS

Resolution 757 was a breakthrough for the United Nations in its handling of the war in Bosnia. However, the UN's precise role was still unclear. It continued to insist that the conditions simply did not exist for the deployment of peacekeeping troops. But the pressure to

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(25) *Ibid.*, 6 June, p. 53.



do something tangible for the war-torn country, with its estimated 6,000 dead and hundreds of thousands of refugees, was now reaching a fever pitch. The media coverage of the humanitarian catastrophe taking place in Bosnia, in particular in the besieged capital of Sarajevo, was having its effect on public opinion around the world, which in turn forced the UN's hand. Although UN officials feared that a peacekeeping role could put UN troops at risk and might allow the Serbs to consolidate their gains, could they stand by while the bloodshed continued to increase? Faced with this dilemma, the UN, hesitatingly at first, began to engage. Once the first step was taken, it became increasingly difficult to disengage. By the fall of 1992, the die had been cast.

The first step came with the UN effort in June 1992 to secure a cease-fire between Serb and Muslim forces in Sarajevo in order to open the airport to humanitarian aid for the capital.<sup>(26)</sup> The airport had been in the hands of the Bosnian Serbs since the outbreak of fighting; they had closed it to all international traffic and as a result had cut off badly-needed relief supplies. UN-sponsored talks had begun on 2 June under the UN's Director of Civil Affairs in Bosnia, Cedric Thornberry, when FRY had called on Bosnian Serb leaders to stop shelling the capital and hand over the airport to UN soldiers. Several days later Serb forces agreed in principle to the request, ostensibly because the Muslims had lifted their own blockade of the Marshal Tito barracks. International pressure and the fear of intervention also undoubtedly played a part.

Under the proposed agreement, UNPROFOR would secure and operate the airport while unloading humanitarian aid and ensuring its safe delivery to Sarajevo's inhabitants. UNPROFOR would also be responsible for overseeing the removal of anti-aircraft weapons from within range of the airport and monitoring the concentration of artillery, mortars and ground-to-ground missiles. On 8 June the UN Security Council passed Resolution 758, which enlarged the mandate and strength of UNPROFOR so that it could perform these functions. Two days later Lieutenant-General Nambiar dispatched his Chief of Staff, Canadian Major-General Lewis MacKenzie, along with 60 military observers, to Sarajevo as Commander-designate of UNPROFOR's new Sarajevo sector.<sup>(27)</sup>

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(26) See the following reports of the Secretary-General: S/24075, 6 June 1992; S/2400, 15 June 1992; S/24201, 29 June 1992; S/24263, 10 July 1992. See also MacKenzie (1993), p. 198ff.

(27) Government of Canada, "Canada Commits Troops for UN to Secure Sarajevo Airport," *News Release*, 10 June 1992.

But the agreement was not to be implemented so easily. The Serbs and Muslims bickered over the terms of the airport agreement and the talks broke down in mutual recrimination. Two short-lived cease-fires over the next fortnight had no effect, and it was not until French President François Mitterand unexpectedly paid a six-hour visit to Sarajevo on 28 June to dramatize Sarajevo's need for humanitarian aid that a breakthrough occurred. Although Mitterand's visit appeared to some as grandstanding, his presence finally convinced Izetbegovic and Karadzic to sign the agreement. Despite continued fighting in the vicinity of the airport, there was a gradual build-up of UNPROFOR personnel over the next week. The first group of 30 was deployed on 28 June and by the next day the UN had achieved a sufficient lull in the fighting to allow in five flights with relief supplies. French troops began to arrive on 1 July and a Canadian battalion was redeployed from Croatia to Sarajevo the following day. On 3 July the airport was officially reopened for humanitarian relief supplies, although in the months to come sporadic attacks would force intermittent closures, some brief and some not so brief. On 13 July the UN Security Council agreed to send an additional 500 troops to join the 1,100 soldiers already supervising the UN relief operation. The Canadian battalion was replaced at the end of July by three smaller battalions contributed by Egypt, France and Ukraine. In the meantime, a land corridor had been successfully opened from the Croatian port of Split to Sarajevo, thereby complementing the air route.

UN peacekeepers were now on the ground in Bosnia but their precise role remained unclear. The Security Council passed Resolution 764 in July defining the humanitarian nature of their mandate - in short, "to ensure the security and functioning of Sarajevo airport and the delivery of humanitarian assistance." Despite UN escorts, however, aid convoys continued to be attacked and looted by local war-lords who showed little respect for the UN presence in Bosnia. UN soldiers remained powerless to respond. As a result, the Security Council approved Resolution 770 on 13 August, which authorized "all measures necessary" (including force) to ensure the delivery of humanitarian aid. At the time of its adoption, Resolution 770 was the most explicit acceptance of the use of UN force ever employed in an internal conflict; however, its precise meaning was vague. European governments, expressing the need for caution, interpreted it as authorizing the use of force only as a last resort; there was no real



desire on the part of the international community to precipitate fighting through an open-ended commitment.<sup>(28)</sup>

Nevertheless, Resolution 770 seemed to act as a catalyst. On 14 August the French government announced that it was prepared to contribute a 1,100-strong force of "protection and escort" to Bosnia to operate under the mandate of the new resolution. Spain, Italy and Belgium also agreed to send troops. The US and Great Britain reiterated their opposition to the use of ground troops but, on 18 August, the latter reversed its decision and announced that it would place 1,800 soldiers at the disposal of the UN. By the beginning of September, Europe had agreed to contribute 5,000 peacekeepers, although it would be some time before they began to arrive in strength.<sup>(29)</sup>

On 14 September the UN went one step further when the Security Council adopted Resolution 776, which increased the number of UN troops in Bosnia by up to 6,000 - in addition to the 1,700 peacekeepers already deployed - to be drawn strictly from NATO countries. The total UN force in the former Yugoslavia was now targeted at 21,000, larger than the Congo peacekeeping operation of 30 years before. Resolution 776 also established a separate Bosnian command which came to be known as UNPROFOR II. Its mandate was significantly enlarged from that of UNPROFOR I: it was to assist and protect UNHCR in its efforts to deliver humanitarian relief throughout Bosnia, and its troops would follow normal peace-keeping rules of engagement. These authorized them to use force in self-defence, including in situations where armed groups attempted to prevent them from carrying out their assigned tasks.<sup>(30)</sup>

## THE RAVAGES OF WAR

The decision of the UN to pursue a policy of humanitarian intervention was a major breakthrough. Finally a glimmer of hope, however small, had appeared for the Bosnian

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(28) See "Report of the Secretary-General on the Situation in Bosnia and Hercegovina," S/24540, 10 September 1992.

(29) *The Economist*, 17 October 1992, p. 55.

(30) On the operational aspects of UNPROFOR II, see "Further Report of the Secretary-General...", S/24848, 24 November 1992, p. 10ff.

people. But experts put the event in context. The opening of the airport by a token UN force and the enlargement of the UN mandate to include the escort of humanitarian convoys would do little to stop the actual fighting. According to Canada's Major-General MacKenzie, 40,000 UN troops were needed in Sarajevo alone to keep the peace. In the meantime, the fighting raged on and the participants showed as little concern for "the international rules of war" as ever.

It was this persistent violation of the rules of war which so appalled the nations of the world. That the fighting between the rival ethnic factions was showing no signs of subsiding was bad enough; what made it worse was the way in which it was being carried out. This was a brutal war by any standard. "Ethnic cleansing" - the forced expulsion of one ethnic group by another, in particular of Muslims by Serb forces - soon became part of the every-day vocabulary of people world-wide. The Bosnian Serbs claimed that the flow of refugees from ethnically mixed regions was the natural consequence of war, but the discovery of concentration camps in Serb-held territory indicated otherwise. Insistence that these camps were no more than collection centres for refugees and prisoners of war was belied by evidence of sporadic executions, torture and other forms of maltreatment, as images of emaciated bodies behind barbed wire flashed around the world.<sup>(31)</sup> The discovery of mass civilian graves and stories of rape of Muslim women soon became common.<sup>(32)</sup> Comparisons with Nazi Germany, though not entirely accurate, were drawn. The Serbs maintained that the Muslims were also guilty of ethnic cleansing and other war crimes, but few believed that the Serbs were not the worst offenders.<sup>(33)</sup>

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(31) The International Committee of the Red Cross estimated in the summer of 1992 that 20,000 people were held in detention camps, although the figure may have been much higher. Some were released in October 1992 after an agreement on the Release and Transfer of Prisoners was signed.

(32) On the rape of Muslim women, see Amnesty International, "Bosnia-Herzegovina: Rape and Sexual Abuse by Armed Forces," 21 January 1993; "EC Investigative Mission into the Treatment of Muslim Women in the Former Yugoslavia: Report to EC Foreign Ministers," 3 February 1993.

(33) See Helsinki Watch, *War Crimes in Bosnia-Herzegovina*, Vols I and II, August 1992 and April 1993 respectively; Z. Pajic, "The Conflict in Bosnia-Herzegovina," The David Davies Memorial Institute of International Studies, Occasional Paper No. 2, February 1993. On UN efforts to respond to ethnic cleansing in 1992, see D. Rieff, "Original Virtue, Original Sin," *The New Yorker*, 23 November 1992, p. 82-95.



It was a human catastrophe of incredible proportions. The death toll steadily mounted into the tens of thousands, and by the end of July more than one million Bosnian men, women and children were homeless. The total for all the former Yugoslavia was close to two million. Nearly 500,000 had fled the region completely, seeking refuge in other countries. The UNHCR, which had been coordinating the UN relief effort in the former Yugoslavia since November 1991 with the assistance of the International Committee of the Red Cross, could barely cope.<sup>(34)</sup>

Diplomatic efforts to deal with the refugee crisis were hampered by the same problem that was to complicate the entire international response to the war in Bosnia: a lack of consensus. Germany, which was taking in over half of Yugoslavian refugees, wanted the EC to adopt a European quota system but Great Britain and France, who had accepted only a handful, argued that they should be assisted as close as possible to their place of origin. Some progress was made at a UNHCR-sponsored conference held in Geneva on 29 July. A number of recommendations were made, including an increased international presence to provide relief and the granting of "temporary protection" to all refugees from the former Yugoslavia. Participating countries pledged US\$152 million as well as logistical support to build winter housing for refugees and to maintain humanitarian road convoys inside Bosnia to relieve besieged cities such as Sarajevo and Gorazde. A standing committee was also established to coordinate the international relief effort. However, the conference failed to reach agreement on the unrestricted granting of asylum to refugees.

Other steps were taken but they were symbolic at best. For example, on 17 July the UN Security Council adopted a resolution (the first of many) condemning the detention camps and reminding all parties of their obligations under the 1949 Geneva Convention. On 13-14 August an extraordinary session of the UN Human Rights Commission was held in Geneva to examine events in the former Yugoslavia. The policy of ethnic cleansing was strongly condemned, and at the same time Tadeusz Mazowiecki, the former prime minister of Poland, was given the task of investigating human rights abuses in the former Yugoslavia. In his first

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(34) For a detailed assessment of the UN's humanitarian assistance program in Bosnia, see "The United Nations and the Situation in the former Yugoslavia" (1993), p. 20-25.

report, released in late August, he "deplored the systematic use of violence" against Bosnian Croats and Muslims by Serbs and recommended that the mandate of UNPROFOR be expanded to include preventing and assisting the victims of human rights abuses in Bosnia. He also suggested that a human rights tribunal be set up.<sup>(35)</sup>

## PRESSURE FOR MILITARY INTERVENTION

There was a more drastic way in which the horrible suffering taking place in Bosnia could be reduced; this was through direct military intervention. At the Helsinki meeting of the CSCE on 9-10 July the Americans and Europeans agreed that they were not contemplating using military force to halt the conflict. But as EC and UN efforts to stem the fighting and curtail the practice of ethnic cleansing in Bosnia continued to fail, increasing numbers of Americans and Europeans began to argue that force was the only answer. They viewed the conflict in simple terms: heavily armed Serbs waging a war of aggression, killing and driving into exile thousands of defenceless Muslims. With the Serbs now in control of two-thirds of Bosnia and the reality of a Greater Serbia looming larger every day, they argued that the time for intervention was now or never.

Those who spoke out in favour of military intervention were a diverse group. In the United States, for example, Democratic presidential candidate Bill Clinton and *The New York Times* joined forces to urge military action. Not surprisingly, Islamic states such as Turkey and Iran also encouraged the use of force. On 25 August, the UN General Assembly adopted a resolution sponsored by the Islamic Conference Organization which cited chapter VII of the UN Charter authorizing the use of force where economic embargo had failed.

There were a number of military options available but nearly all of them posed their own unique problems. The United States and Europe, with enough ground troops and equipment, could undoubtedly defeat the Serbs. But it would require perhaps 50,000 men and there was no guarantee of a quick victory. Bosnia, with its mountainous terrain, was tailor-made

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(35) See Human Rights Watch, *The Lost Agenda: Human Rights and UN Field Operations*, New York, 1993, p. 99-100.



for guerilla warfare, a type of combat at which the Serbs had proved highly adept in the past. The American military stated throughout the Bosnian conflict that "we do deserts - we don't do mountains."<sup>(36)</sup> The spectre of Vietnam loomed large.

Air strikes against Serb positions in the hills surrounding Sarajevo and other besieged towns in Bosnia were also suggested by some military experts. While this would avoid the deployment of large numbers of ground forces, it was questionable how useful it would prove, as the weapon of choice in Bosnia was the very portable mortar. There was also a fear that air strikes might provoke Serb reprisals against UN troops.

As an alternative to direct intervention against the Serbs, there was the option of stepping in to protect civilians. NATO and the WEU had looked into the feasibility of this concept, whether by clearing relief corridors cut off by the war or creating safe havens. Again, this would require the deployment of thousands of ground troops (especially in the case of relief corridors) prepared to engage in possibly heavy fighting.

Finally, numerous Muslim countries were urging the UN to lift its arms embargo against the former Yugoslavia so that Bosnian Muslims could import the weapons needed to fight the better-armed Serbs on equal terms. Bosnian president Alija Izetbegovic wrote to the Security Council on 3 August demanding that Bosnia be allowed to import arms to "achieve the right to individual and collective self-defence" guaranteed by Article 51 of the UN Charter.

Most western governments entertained these various military options only to reject them. It was clear that national interest was not sufficiently at stake while the risk of heavy casualties was far too great. As the US Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General Colin Powell, remarked, "the crisis in Bosnia is especially complex. The solution must ultimately be a political one."<sup>(37)</sup>

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(36) J. Fenske, "The West and 'The Problem from Hell,'" *Current History*, November 1993, p. 354.

(37) 9 October 1992, cited in Hans-Christian Hagman, "The Balkan Conflicts: Prevention Is Better Than Cure," *Global Affairs*, Summer 1993, p. 32.

## THE LONDON CONFERENCE AND BEYOND

Throughout the summer of 1992, as the UN adopted a more assertive role in Bosnia and the possibility of military intervention was discussed, EC peacemaking efforts continued; however, little headway was made. When progress did come about, trans-Atlantic misunderstandings at times proved costly. For example, on 17 July Lord Carrington brokered a cease-fire plan among the three factions requiring that heavy weapons be placed under UN supervision. But no one consulted the UN Secretary-General over the plan's feasibility, and he complained to the Security Council on 21 July that he had been left "in the invidious position of having to advise the Council on the implementation of a mandate behind which the Council had already thrown its political support." He believed that, given the strained resources of the UN, which was actively engaged in 13 other peacekeeping operations, it was the EC that should be putting its resources at the service of the UN and not the other way around. Since the warring parties did not declare the locations and quantities of their heavy weapons and the cease-fire was typically ignored on the ground, the agreement fell through. Nonetheless, the incident revealed the strained relations and differences of opinion that were emerging within the international community.<sup>(38)</sup>

As the EC had made so little progress in pushing the Serbs and Muslims towards peace, some countries, France for one, began to wonder whether the UN should become an equal partner in the peacemaking process. The altercation in July certainly suggested that at the very least the two international bodies should cooperate more. There was also concern that perhaps the Serbs were suspicious of the EC and the role played by Germany, their traditional enemy. Although the British and Americans believed the UN already had enough to do with its peacekeeping responsibilities, by the end of August it was decided that some new effort had to be made to break the stalemate.

The London Conference, co-chaired by British prime minister John Major and the UN Secretary-General, was attended from 26-28 August by delegates from the UN, the EC and

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(38) See "Report of the Secretary-General on the Situation in Bosnia and Hercegovina," S/24333, 21 July 1992.



the CSCE, as well as representatives of the main Yugoslav factions. A special working group on Bosnia was established "to promote a cessation of hostilities and a constitutional settlement" in the republic, as well as a Geneva-based negotiating forum sponsored jointly by the UN and the EC. The UN representative remained Cyrus Vance, while Lord David Owen, a former British foreign secretary, replaced the recently retired Lord Carrington as the EC envoy. The Geneva Conference was to become the driving force behind all subsequent peace initiatives.

All parties to the conflict were urged "immediately and without preconditions to resume negotiations on future constitutional arrangements." Vance and Owen were to conduct these negotiations according to strict guidelines. Above all else, the "integrity of present frontiers" was to be fully respected unless changes were agreed to by all factions; moreover, territory seized by force was to be returned. Should these negotiations produce a settlement, the possibility of a UN peacekeeping force "to maintain the cease-fire, control military movements and undertake other confidence-building measures" was mentioned.<sup>(39)</sup>

The London Conference provided new hopes for an end to the fighting; however, those hopes were short-lived. While the international community may have finally shown some degree of consensus in its handling of the war in Bosnia, the combatants showed no more willingness to settle their differences. Peace negotiations between the three ethnic communities in September yielded no results, while agreements reached at London to allow the UN to monitor heavy weapons around Sarajevo and other Muslim-held towns were ignored. Serb bombardment of Muslim territory continued unabated and by October the promise had largely been forgotten. Since the London Conference contained no real hint of punitive measures or the threat of outside force, Vance and Owen possessed limited leverage. As John Major remarked, "we cannot rely on the good will of the parties. We need pressure."<sup>(40)</sup>

What pressure was applied before the end of 1992 proved no more successful than in the past. On 22 September the UN General Assembly voted to deny the former Yugoslavia's seat to FRY.<sup>(41)</sup> Two weeks later the UN Security Council voted unanimously to create a war

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(39) *Keesing's*, August 1992, p. 39036.

(40) J. Newhouse, "The Diplomatic Round: No Exit, No Entrance," *The New Yorker*, 28 June 1993, p. 45.

(41) The CSCE suspended Yugoslavia from its membership on 10 July 1992.

crimes commission to examine evidence of "grave breaches of international humanitarian law" in the former Yugoslavia. The aim was to discourage new excesses by letting perpetrators know they might be held accountable. However, this action was no more than a call for evidence; no tribunal was established or potential criminals named.<sup>(42)</sup> UN Resolution 781, approved by the Security Council on 9 October, imposed a ban on flights by warplanes in Bosnian air space; however, UNPROFOR could only monitor compliance, not enforce it. Although Serbian warplanes were eventually persuaded to stay on the ground, it made little difference - air power had played a negligible role in the conflict.<sup>(43)</sup> Finally, on 23 November warships of NATO and the WEU began to stop and search any ships entering or leaving Yugoslav waters suspected of ignoring UN sanctions against Serbia.

As the early promise of the London Conference began to fade and the Serbs continued their success on the ground, popular pressure for military action again mounted. The Islamic Conference Organization hinted at possible intervention but in Geneva Cyrus Vance and David Owen made a strong plea to avoid any military action that would imperil either their negotiations or the 7,000 peacekeepers in Bosnia. Senior UN military officials in the region agreed.

In the west, hesitation ruled the day. Possible military options continued to be debated but a consensus remained elusive. Washington was warming to the idea, still popular in Islamic countries, of lifting the arms embargo in order to deliver weapons and ammunition to the Muslims, but Europe, with the exception of Germany, would not give its support, being convinced that this would only add fuel to the fire and prolong the conflict.

On 16 November, the Security Council asked Boutros-Ghali to study the French idea of setting up safe havens in central and eastern Bosnia where Muslims were being starved

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(42) The Security Council finally voted to set up a war crimes tribunal on 22 Feb 1993 to try those accused of atrocities. The 11-member tribunal met for the first time in the Hague on 17 November 1993. See S/25704, 3 May 1993; F. Hampson, "The Case for a War Crimes Tribunal," The David Davies Memorial Institute of International Studies, Occasional Paper No. 3, February 1993; T. Meron, "The Case for War Crimes Trials in Yugoslavia," *Foreign Affairs*, Summer 1993, p. 122-35.

(43) See "Report of the Secretary-General...", S/24767, 5 November 1992. Also "Letter dated 20 November 1992 from the Secretary-General Addressed to the President of the Security Council," S/24840, 24 November 1992.



into submission before being forced out of their homes. Once again, such a move would require the deployment of thousands of western troops with clear authorization to fight, although they would not (in theory at least) be engaged in offensive operations. There was another dilemma. Safe havens would undoubtedly save lives but they ran the risk of encouraging ethnic partition and destroying any hope for an intact Bosnia. The president of ICRC had stated in October that the priority was to save lives, even if it meant aiding and abetting ethnic cleansing.<sup>(44)</sup> The UN High Commissioner for Refugees, Sadako Ogata, was not so sure; she worried that the plan would be extremely difficult to implement. NATO planners expressed similar reservations.

Finally, there was considerable debate near the end of the year about whether to enforce the no-fly-zone. The Serbs continued to violate Bosnian air space, although they insisted that these flights were of a purely humanitarian nature, such as delivering medicine or evacuating wounded. UNPROFOR observers confirmed that no clearly defined combat missions had been flown since November. Nevertheless, NATO foreign ministers agreed on 17 December to support any future UN resolution enforcing the flight ban over Bosnia. Some experts suggested that the no-fly tactic suited western interests perfectly, being an ostensibly activist measure that satisfied public opinion yet fell well short of any firm commitment to stop the bloodshed.

## NEW PEACE PROPOSALS: THE VANCE-OWEN PLAN

As 1992 came to a close, the prospects for peace in Bosnia seemed as remote as ever. Western military intervention had been ruled out for the foreseeable future and the warring ethnic factions showed no signs of compromise. But as 1993 dawned, a small glimmer of hope appeared. It remained to be seen whether the Serbs and Muslims would seize the opportunity to make peace or simply exploit it to their advantage.

On 2 January 1993, the leaders of the three ethnic groups sat down in Geneva to hold direct talks for the first time. On the table was a comprehensive peace package put together by the co-chairmen of the Geneva Conference, Cyrus Vance and Lord Owen. The

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(44) *The Economist*, 21 November 1992, p. 59-60.

package, based on proposals first presented to the parties in October 1992, contained three major elements: constitutional principles, a map dividing the republic into 10 provinces, and cease-fire and demilitarization guidelines. The co-chairmen insisted that all three elements were closely linked and could not be implemented separately.

Under the terms of the Vance-Owen plan, Bosnia would become a decentralized state with most governmental functions carried out by its provinces, although the latter would possess no "international legal personality" or authority to sign agreements with foreign states. The central government would have responsibility for defence, foreign policy and trade. While none of the provinces would be ethnically pure, each of the three groups would form the majority in three of the 10 provinces, with Sarajevo becoming a demilitarized open city. The Serbs, who controlled roughly 70% of Bosnia, would receive about 45% of the country's territory, while the Muslims and Croats would divide the rest. UN-policed corridors or "throughways" would be created to ensure the free movement of people and goods between provinces.<sup>(45)</sup>

The Vance-Owen plan was a desperate attempt to do the impossible. It was designed on the one hand to appease the Muslims by preserving the territorial integrity of Bosnia, while at the same time offering the Serbs and Croats substantial power and autonomy through the provinces. The Croats were happy, their leader Mate Boban accepting all three documents almost immediately. Since the Croatian provinces were located in western Bosnia, adjacent to Croatia itself, he may well have seen the Vance-Owen plan as paving the way for a possible union with Zagreb at a later date.<sup>(46)</sup>

But it was a different story for the Muslims and Serbs. Although Bosnian president Alija Izetbegovic was no doubt pleased that Bosnia would still exist as a national entity, he realised full well that it would do so in name only; the central government would possess few real powers. Moreover, he could not accept that Muslims would be forced to

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(45) See F. Watson, "Peace Proposals for Bosnia-Herzegovina," House of Commons Library, Great Britain, Research Paper No. 93/35, 23 March 1993.

(46) Fighting between Croats and Muslims escalated again in January 1993, as the former attempted to consolidate their territory around Mostar, the capital of their self-proclaimed republic. It could be argued that the Vance-Owen plan only encouraged the Croats to drive the Muslims out of the west.



relinquish much of the territory they had held before the fighting broke out. The Vance-Owen plan, he argued, punished the victims, as the Muslims would be unfairly squeezed between Serbs and Croats. But the international community had examined the realities on the ground and concluded that short of military intervention, which no one in the west was prepared to endorse, this was the best it could do.

Like the Muslims, the Serbs initially refused to sign any of the documents. Not only were they being asked to surrender hard-won territory (in the north, for example, where they had established a corridor linking Serb-held lands in Croatia and Bosnia with Serbia proper), but their provinces would be scattered throughout the country, forestalling any dream of a "state within a state" or even a Greater Serbia. They still held to the principle, articulated in the Lisbon agreement of February 1992, of a confederation of three independent states. They had rejected the October proposals on the same grounds.

The two parties played for time - the Muslims hoping in vain that the United States, which shared Izetbegovic's doubts about the plan, might intervene, the Serbs praying that the new proposals would die a natural death. Although Izetbegovic did accept the constitutional principles later in the month, he continued to reject the map and the cease-fire provisions. The Serbs, apparently under pressure from Milosevic, went one better, signing both the constitutional principles and the cease-fire accord. The Serbian president may have begun to feel the sting of sanctions or understood that although the Vance-Owen plan was not perfect, the possible alternatives - isolation, foreign intervention, substantial loss of Serb territory - might be worse. However, the Bosnian Serbs would not accept the map, even after 14 January, when EC foreign ministers gave them a six-day ultimatum to accept the plan in its entirety.

## AMERICAN INITIATIVE

By the end of January the two sides were deadlocked. The talks were moved from Geneva to New York at the beginning of February in the hope that the Security Council and the United States would endorse the plan. Although the EC had approved the package on 1 February, the US remained sceptical. The American press made references to Munich and appeasement, while Warren Christopher, the Secretary of State, believed that the plan was

impractical and rewarded Serb aggression. President Clinton reportedly wanted the map redrawn to give more territory to the Muslims.<sup>(47)</sup> But the Americans offered no real alternatives. Clinton had chided President Bush during the election campaign for his timid stance on Bosnia and had even suggested possible military intervention. Now the American president was being criticized for his own indecision and lack of vision. Washington's policy on Bosnia, the critics were shouting, was adrift.

On 10 February, Clinton's administration spoke out. The American government finally endorsed, somewhat reluctantly, the Vance-Owen plan, although it stipulated that in no circumstances should it be imposed on any one party. The president also promised to become "actively and directly engaged" in the peace process and made a number of proposals aimed at breaking the deadlock. These included tightening the sanctions against Serbia; enforcing the no-fly zone through a Security Council resolution; establishing a war crimes tribunal to try those suspected of committing atrocities; lending American support, in cooperation with the UN and NATO, to the enforcement of a "viable agreement" on Bosnia, using force if necessary; and encouraging the greater involvement of Russia in the peace process. Clinton also appointed Reginald Bartholomew, US ambassador to NATO, as special American envoy to the international peace talks on the former Yugoslavia.

The Americans did not stop there. In mid-February the UN High Commissioner for Refugees suspended relief operations in eastern Bosnia for two days in protest against the persistent attacks by Serb forces on aid convoys. Some Muslim enclaves in the north had been cut off from aid for months, and Muslims in Sarajevo had refused to accept assistance until these towns had been helped. Although UN peacekeepers were technically allowed to respond to such interference with force, they were only lightly armed and often outnumbered by the forces opposing them. Clinton offered a possible solution. At the end of February he announced that American troops would air-drop relief supplies to areas - Serb, Muslim or Croat - cut off from UN operations. Although the plan carried enormous political and practical risks - fear of reprisal against UN troops, the possibility of American casualties, the problem of accurate drops

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(47) In the US and elsewhere the plan soon became the object of such sardonic remarks as "the only thing worse than the failure of Vance-Owen would be the success of Vance-Owen." Fenske (November 1993), p. 355.



- the move was endorsed by NATO foreign ministers and the first air-drop took place on 1 March. Despite initial teething troubles, the drops proved a success. What is more, they represented the first active involvement of American forces in Bosnia.<sup>(48)</sup>

## APPLYING NEW PRESSURE

With the American government's decision to become more involved in the peace process and to support the Vance-Owen plan, there was hope once again that a turning point in the Bosnian conflict had been reached. But the fighting continued through the winter and early spring of 1993, especially in the east, where Serb forces attempted to consolidate those regions designated Muslim under the Vance-Owen plan.<sup>(49)</sup> Serious clashes were also taking place in the west, only here it was the Croats who were squeezing the Muslims.<sup>(50)</sup>

On the negotiating front, progress remained slow. After moving the talks to New York at the beginning of February, little headway was made over the next month.<sup>(51)</sup> In early March, Izetbegovic finally accepted the cease-fire provisions, after having been assured by UNPROFOR that it would take possession of the Serbs' heavy weapons. But agreement on the map was still proving difficult. Peace negotiators tried to persuade Izetbegovic that he was being offered the best he could possibly hope for in the prevailing circumstances. With the US now supporting the plan, Izetbegovic perhaps realized that he could not hold out much longer. Finally, during the next round of talks lasting from 16 to 25 March, the Muslims and Croats agreed on a revised map: Sarajevo province would now be placed under Muslim rather than

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(48) See Watson (1993), p. 25-28.

(49) "Situation of Human Rights in the Territory of the Former Yugoslavia," UN Economic and Social Council, E/CN.4/1994/3, 5 May 1993.

(50) On Croat ethnic cleansing, see "Situation of Human Rights in the Territory of the Former Yugoslavia," UN Economic and Social Council, E/CN.4/1994/4, 19 May 1993.

(51) See "Report of the Secretary-General on the New York Round of the Peace Talks on Bosnia and Hercegovina (3-8 February 1993)," S/25248, 8 February 1993.

tripartite control. The two sides also signed a fourth document setting out the interim arrangements to be put in place before new elections.<sup>(52)</sup>

The plan had now been accepted in its entirety by both the Muslims and Croats; the Serbs, however, still repulsed by the idea of surrendering territory, continued to reject the map. The international community decided that the time had come to apply further pressure. The UN Security Council tightened the screws on the Serbs on 31 March by passing Resolution 816, permitting NATO aircraft to shoot down planes violating the no-fly zone in Bosnian airspace. Serbian aircraft had bombed two small villages near Sarajevo on 13 March, the first confirmed bombing raid since the imposition of the flight ban. By mid-April NATO fighters from the French, Dutch and American air forces were enforcing the ban, although they were forbidden to fire on trespassing aircraft unless a clear warning had first been issued.

When the self-proclaimed Bosnian Serb assembly, meeting in Pale (just north of Sarajevo), rejected the Vance-Owen plan on 2 April, the outside world went one step further. Since the end of March, the EC had been threatening FRY with total isolation if the Bosnian Serbs rejected the agreement again, although Milosevic continued to insist that there was little he could do. After the latest refusal, the Community began to pressure the Security Council to implement new sanctions against Yugoslavia, threatening to impose its own if the UN declined to act. The Security Council hesitated, not wanting to force the hand of Russian President Boris Yeltsin, who faced hard-line opposition from pro-Serb conservatives and was under pressure to veto any resolution endorsing new economic measures against Belgrade. After numerous delays, however, sanctions were finally approved on 17 April. They were to go into effect 26 April, the day after the Russian referendum that endorsed Yeltsin's presidency. The new measures banned the transport of goods through Yugoslavia, froze its financial assets overseas, prohibited Yugoslavian ships from the territory of UN members, and detained ships, trains and aircraft already abroad.

This latest slate of UN economic measures seemed to have an effect on Belgrade. The Yugoslavian economy was in tatters, and there was speculation that further sanctions might

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(52) "Report of the Secretary-General on the Activities of the International Conference on the Former Yugoslavia: Peace Talks on Bosnia and Hercegovina," S/25479, 26 March 1993.



tear the country apart.<sup>(53)</sup> As a result, Yugoslavian officials began to pressure the Bosnian Serbs to accept the peace plan; whether this was a genuine bid to stop the fighting or merely an attempt to confuse the west as it imposed new sanctions and contemplated military intervention, no one could be sure.

Either way, it was still not enough. Talks in Belgrade broke down on 25 April and the next day the Bosnian Serb Assembly again rejected the proposed map.<sup>(54)</sup> Even a promise by Owen that the UN would establish "secure corridors" linking non-contiguous Bosnian Serb provinces and that demilitarized Serb areas would be protected by UN troops could not sway the Serbs.<sup>(55)</sup> The Assembly's promise to put the plan to a referendum in Bosnian Serb-held territory the next month was labelled a "cynical ploy" by Warren Christopher.

The Geneva conference made one last-ditch effort at the beginning of May to bring the Serbs on side. With the Bosnian Serb Assembly set to meet yet again on 5 May to reconsider its latest decision to reject the map, Karadzic came under greater pressure than ever from Belgrade to accept the terms of the agreement and use his political weight to sway the vote. On 2 May he reluctantly gave in and, President Milosevic at his side, agreed to the map in Athens.<sup>(56)</sup> But the Bosnian Assembly paid little heed. Three days later it again refused to sign the agreement and confirmed that a referendum would be held immediately. The outcome surprised no one. On 15-16 May, Bosnia's Serbs voted overwhelmingly to reject the Vance-Owen plan, while at the same time endorsing the principle of a separate Serb state.

The Yugoslavian government immediately announced that it was cutting its ties with the Bosnian Serbs and that it would deprive them of all vital supplies except humanitarian aid. This took the wind out of an intense build-up of international pressure for tougher action

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(53) On the effect of sanctions, see "Serbia-Montenegro: Implementation of UN Economic Sanctions," US General Accounting Office, 22 April 1993; Susan L. Woodward, "Yugoslavia: Divide and Fail," *The Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*, November 1993, p. 24-27.

(54) "Report of the Secretary-General...", S/25708, 30 April 1993.

(55) There is some debate over just what Owen offered the Serbs. See *The Economist*, 15 May 1993.

(56) "Report of the Secretary-General...", S/25709, 3 May 1993. Yeltsin's win in the referendum of 25 April and his warning to the Serbs that they could not rely indefinitely on Russian support, may have had an effect on Milosevic.

against Belgrade. But Milosevic's sincerity was always in doubt; when the UN offered international observers to monitor the country's borders, he bluntly refused. It soon became apparent that supplies from Serbia were still crossing the Bosnian border.

## TRANS-ATLANTIC TRAVAILS

Throughout this period of frenzied negotiation, the logistics of implementing the Vance-Owen plan were being discussed within UN and NATO circles. Although Boutros-Ghali was insistent that the UN should have ultimate political and strategic control of the operation (it would after all be financed collectively by UN member-states), he realized from the start that the agreement would exceed the planning capability of the UN Secretariat and UNPROFOR. Since NATO was the only body with an adequate organization to manage such a large operation, it agreed to lay the groundwork. NATO experts estimated that 60 - 75,000 troops would be required to carry out the various military tasks; the bulk of the force would be provided by the United States, with Great Britain and France supplying large contingents as well.<sup>(57)</sup> But troubling questions remained: Could such a large force actually be assembled? How long would it remain in Bosnia? What would be the ultimate cost of deployment, and could the UN, with its stretched finances, afford it?

By the time the Serbs had rejected the Vance-Owen plan on 5 May, however, talk had shifted away from the logistics of peacekeeping to the prospect of immediate military intervention. Never had such discussion been taken so seriously, especially in the United States. The American military remained opposed on both tactical and strategic grounds to any large-scale military action. Although some military experts suggested that the Serbs could be defeated within a week by two or three well-trained divisions, most were arguing that it would now require hundreds of thousands of troops over an indefinite period. Clinton took this advice to heart; he continued to insist that the United States would not deploy ground troops in Bosnia

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(57) See "Report of the Secretary-General pursuant to Security Council Resolution 820 (1993)," S/25668, 26 April 1993. See also M. Goulding, "The Evolution of United Nations Peacekeeping," *International Affairs*, Vol 69, No 3, Summer 93, p. 459, which discusses the mandate of the proposed peacekeeping force.



unless a viable peace agreement had been signed. However, his administration was running out of patience with Serb recalcitrance. Warren Christopher, Vice-President Al Gore and National Security Adviser Anthony Lake were in favour of air strikes, Defense Secretary Les Aspin was non-committal, while Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff General Colin Powell opposed such action. Finally, at the end of April Clinton chose the so-called "lift-and-strike" option: suspending the UN arms embargo and launching air strikes against the Bosnian Serbs to keep them at bay while the Muslims learned to operate the new sophisticated weaponry that was flooding in. It was soon revealed that Washington had already deployed 100 military-intelligence troops in Bosnia to locate possible targets, especially supply routes across the Serbian border.<sup>(58)</sup>

Christopher was despatched to Europe to sound out Washington's NATO allies but it quickly became apparent that, with the exception of Germany, no country in the EC would support "lift-and-strike." Both new and old arguments were employed. Britain and France once again expressed the fear, as did UN officials on the ground, that any military action ran the risk of precipitating Serb reprisal attacks against their peacekeeping troops in Bosnia.<sup>(59)</sup>

Moreover, as the EC Foreign Ministers pointed out in Denmark on 25 April, lifting the arms embargo might escalate the conflict and perhaps allow it to spread outside Bosnia's borders.<sup>(60)</sup> There were other questions, some basic, some not: Where would the arms come from? How would they be delivered? What were the political and military objectives of air strikes? Field Marshal Sir Richard Vincent, the British Chairman of NATO's Military Committee, advised Western governments in late April that they should decide what they wanted to achieve in Bosnia before advocating any kind of enforcement.<sup>(61)</sup>

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(58) For an excellent discussion of the debate over "lift and strike," see Newhouse, "No Exit, No Entrance" (1993).

(59) It was becoming increasingly evident that UN peacekeeping troops in Bosnia severely restricted the options available to the west in dealing with the Bosnian Serbs. The Bosnian government realized this. On 11 May it requested that the UN remove its 9,000 peacekeepers to clear the way for a suspension of the arms embargo and possible air strikes.

(60) Although UN peacekeepers had been deployed in Macedonia since January 1993 to guard against this possibility - perhaps the first example of UN preventive deployment - there was still the Serbian province of Kosovo, which Belgrade viewed with suspicion because of its Albanian majority.

(61) *Keesing's*, April 1993, p. 39426. On the question of political objectives, see *The Economist*, 8 May 1993, p. 54-55.

The Europeans would compromise very little, as they remained committed to the idea of peacekeeping and the delivery of humanitarian aid. At the very least, they hoped to avoid any serious talk of military action until Milosevic's pledge to seal the border with Bosnia had been tested. The British government hinted that they might agree at a later date to limited air strikes against Serb supply and communications lines (Lord Owen had even suggested that this might be necessary) but only as a last resort. The Russians suggested that an easing of sanctions against Belgrade might produce results, while the French once again recommended creating safe areas to protect besieged Muslims in eastern Bosnia and elsewhere.

The Americans were not prepared to act on their own. Attending a meeting of senior NATO military officials in Brussels on 27 April, General Colin Powell made it clear that the American government would not consider any military action without specific authority from the UN.<sup>(62)</sup> Since there was a possibility that Russia or France might veto any Security Council resolution advocating the lift-and-strike option, Washington had effectively reached a dead end. The Bosnian Serb gamble that a lack of consensus in the west would prevent any possibility of direct military intervention continued to pay dividends.

The growing rift between the US and Europe was soon being labelled by some observers as the greatest crisis in trans-Atlantic relations since the Suez debacle of 1956. The language was not always diplomatic. Joseph Biden, senior Democrat on the Senate Foreign Relations Committee and a firm supporter of "lift-and-strike," characterized European policy as a "discouraging mosaic of indifference, timidity, self-delusion and hypocrisy."<sup>(63)</sup> John Newhouse perhaps summed it up best: "Washington sees the Europeans as wimpish. Europeans see the Clinton administration as indifferent to realities."<sup>(64)</sup> Perhaps more important, the split revealed different concepts of what the conflict was about. The Europeans saw Bosnia as being consumed by civil war, while the Americans viewed it as an independent state being victimized by externally directed aggression.<sup>(65)</sup>

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(62) *Keesing's*, April 1993, p. 39426.

(63) For Biden's views, see *To Stand against Aggression: Milosevic, the Bosnian Republic and the Conscience of the West*, A Report to the Committee on Foreign Relations, US Senate, April 1993.

(64) Newhouse, "No Exit, No Entrance" (1993), p. 44.

(65) See Tucker and Hendrickson (1993), p. 16.



## DEATH OF A PEACE PLAN

The Vance-Owen plan was now in its death throes, although the international community refused to admit as much publicly. However, the evidence could not be ignored. Not only had the Serbs categorically rejected the peace plan and were now talking of partitioning the country along ethnic lines, but on 6 May, before the referendum had even been held, the Security Council unanimously adopted Resolution 824, which declared the besieged Muslim enclaves of Sarajevo, Tuzla, Zepa, Gorazde, Bihac and Srebrenica "safe areas." The warring factions were ordered to keep the areas free from "armed attacks or any other hostile act" and allow UN military observers access to monitor their security. At a meeting of foreign ministers held in Washington on 22 May Russia, the United States, Great Britain, France and Spain signed a "joint strategy" to guard the safe areas. The signatories to the Washington Agreement denied that the Vance-Owen plan was dead or that military intervention had been completely ruled out as an option. Likewise, NATO defence ministers, meeting in Brussels on 26 May, emphasized that safe areas should be seen as a means to an end and not as a substitute, keeping alive the possibility that the Vance-Owen plan might still be revived. But observers world-wide expressed grave doubts.

The six designated safe areas were the scene of complete despair, as relentless artillery bombardment, ethnic cleansing and severe shortages of food and other humanitarian assistance had produced a human tragedy.<sup>(66)</sup> When the Serbs tried to close the ring in the late winter and spring of 1993, UN forces became more and more involved in efforts to evacuate Muslims from these besieged areas. Srebrenica, in eastern Bosnia, was perhaps the most celebrated case. In March, Lieutenant-General Phillipe Morillon, commander of UN forces in Bosnia, entered the town with a small force and remained there for nearly a month until the siege was lifted. A 150-strong company of Canadian peacekeepers then began to evacuate its inhabitants and disarm the Muslim defenders, resulting in accusations by the international press and the Bosnian government that the UN was encouraging ethnic cleansing. Nevertheless, at

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(66) The UN estimated in March 1993 that there were over two million Bosnians, or half the original population, receiving aid from UNHCR. The number was expected to increase, although international financial support was beginning to dry up.

the end of April Srebrenica was finally designated a safe area.<sup>(67)</sup> With the failure of the peace talks and the increased determination of the Serbs to wipe out the last remaining pockets of Muslim resistance, the UN concluded, mainly at French insistence, that extending the safe area concept to other regions of Bosnia was the only option left short of full-scale intervention.

But some members of NATO - in particular those not consulted - were less than sanguine, and the plan was widely criticized in the western press. Once again, there was concern that the Serbs were being rewarded and the Muslims punished. Indeed, many experts agreed that the new plan was a *de facto* recognition of the Bosnian status quo, freezing the territorial outcome of 14 months of civil war and emboldening Serb and Croat nationalists in their alleged aim of partitioning Bosnia at the expense of the Muslim population.<sup>(68)</sup> UN workers on the ground, including the UN aid chief in Bosnia, Jose-Maria Mendiluce, expressed fears that the designated zones would become ghettos, vulnerable to disease and totally dependent on indefinite UN food aid.<sup>(69)</sup> With hostile Serbs and Croats surrounding the towns, there was no guarantee aid would even get through. *The Economist* suggested that the Muslims were being herded into "homelands" similar to those established in South Africa. The message was clear: "Apartheid is growing in Europe."<sup>(70)</sup>

Not surprisingly, president Izetbegovic initially rejected the agreement. He accused the west of abandoning Bosnia and of herding Muslims into "reservations." But on 7 June, with military intervention now more unlikely than ever, he accepted the plan with certain conditions: extension of the size of the six areas, the establishment of corridors between the towns and the withdrawal of surrounding Serb artillery. Since these demands would require major Serb concessions, especially in terms of territory, there was little chance of their being accepted.

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(67) See *The Lost Agenda*, p. 97-99.

(68) Not surprisingly, Karadzic applauded the safe area concept while at the same time denouncing the Vance-Owen plan.

(69) Curiously, Mendiluce admitted during the episode in Srebrenica that the Serbs were using the UN as an instrument of ethnic cleansing. "The only thing we can do is to try and save as many lives as possible." *Economist Intelligence Unit*, Country Report, Bosnia, 2nd quarter 1993, p. 17.

(70) 29 May 1993, p. 53.



Meanwhile, preparations were underway to implement the safe area plan; however, this too met with criticism. The Security Council approved Resolution 836 on 4 June, permitting UNPROFOR to use force if any of the six safe areas were attacked. But it was unclear whether this applied to attacks only on UNPROFOR troops or civilians as well.<sup>(71)</sup> The issue was not clarified at a NATO foreign ministers meeting in Athens on 10 June when NATO agreed to provide "protective air power in case of attack against UNPROFOR in the performance of its overall mandate." While several European countries, including France and Great Britain, hinted that civilians in the safe areas should also be defended, the US was less enthusiastic.<sup>(72)</sup> Moreover, it was unclear whether NATO aircraft would protect all peacekeepers in Bosnia or just those guarding the safe areas. NATO Secretary-General Manfred Woerner stated that it applied only to the safe areas, but Warren Christopher intimated that all of Bosnia would be covered.

Another question bedevilled the planners: how many ground troops would be required to guard the safe areas, and could they be found? Lieutenant-General Lars-Eric Wahlgren, UN commander in the former Yugoslavia, estimated that 34,000 troops would be needed, but Boutros-Ghali, realizing that this number could never be raised with the UN stretched so thin, scaled it down to 7,500.<sup>(73)</sup> EC foreign ministers had agreed in Luxembourg on 8 June to the principle of an increase in the commitment of ground forces to protect the safe areas but this did not necessarily translate into action. At the end of June, Britain and Spain refused to send any more troops, while Russia wanted to see a clearer mandate before making any commitment. The US, of course, had supported the plan reluctantly to begin with, and it continued to refuse to send ground troops to Bosnia. By the end of July only 1,200 had been found. Although more troops would slowly trickle in, including a large contingent contributed by the French, deployment took weeks, sometimes months, and the safe area plan was never completely achieved. In some towns, such as Gorazde and Zepa, journalists claimed there was no protection at all.

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(71) *The Economist* called Resolution 836 a "masterpiece of timorous obfuscation." 12 June 1993, p. 17.

(72) It is interesting that the safe areas in Bosnia were not referred to as "havens," as in the case of the Iraqi Kurds whose safety was guaranteed by Western forces.

(73) "Report of the Secretary-General...", S/25939, 14 June 1993, p. 3. By the end of July there were 9,000 troops in Bosnia, the bulk of whom were French, British or Canadian.

## PARTITION

If the Washington Agreement did not kill the Vance-Owen plan, it mortally wounded it. Its demise came on 16 June 1993, when Milosevic and Croatian president Franjo Tudjman agreed in Geneva to carve Bosnia into three ethnically based states functioning under a federal or confederal constitution. The negotiations had now come full circle, since the Lisbon agreement of February 1992 had made very much the same proposal. The only difference was that the Serbs and Croats would now receive more territory, based on their military gains. Karadzic and Mate Boban, the Bosnian Croat leader, almost immediately started to work on the details of the new plan, in particular the boundaries of the proposed states. Although the London Conference had decreed that borders could not be changed by force and conquered land was to be returned, Lord Owen had more or less come to accept the inevitable: "I am a realist and we have to live with what's happened on the ground." The dream of a Bosnian state was close to disappearing.

It was proposed that the Muslim state would stretch in a crescent shape from Sarajevo to Zenica and Tuzla in central Bosnia. The Muslims would also receive the north-western Bihac enclave and an outlet to the Adriatic. The Serbs and Croats would split the rest. Izetbegovic naturally would have nothing to do with the agreement, despite warnings from Karadzic that if he refused to sign, the Serbs and Croats would partition Bosnia strictly between themselves. The Bosnian president feared that the Serb and Croat territories would eventually be annexed to Serbia and Croatia (although both Milosevic and Tudjman made a pledge that this would not happen) leaving the Muslims with a small parcel of land jammed between enemy states. Moreover, the new proposal would involve further *de facto* ethnic cleansing; tens of thousands of Serbs, Croats and Muslims were left on the wrong side of the front lines and they would have to be moved.<sup>(74)</sup>

For much of July Izetbegovic tried in vain to avoid the destruction of Bosnia; however, he came under increasing pressure from Owen and Thorvald Stoltenberg (who had

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(74) "Letter dated 8 July 1993 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council," S/26066, 8 July 1993.



replaced Vance as the UN envoy at the beginning of May) to accept the inevitable. They tried to convince him that, although the new agreement was flawed, it was his best chance of avoiding an even worse fate at the hands of Serb and Croat forces. Clearly, the mediators were growing impatient; they even invited the other members of Bosnia's presidency to Geneva to discuss the agreement. The rest of the international community offered little comfort. Izetbegovic pleaded in vain with the EC to lift the arms embargo. Although the Community insisted that the Muslims should not be forced to sign the agreement (as did the G7 leaders meeting in Munich in July), the pressure was clearly building.

Izetbegovic began to soften. On 18 July he conceded that "if we want peace this year, now, then we will have to reconcile ourselves to...major concessions."<sup>(75)</sup> The key players, including Tudjman and Milosevic, sat down at the negotiating table in Geneva on 27 July and three days later Izetbegovic reluctantly agreed to the separation of Bosnia into three constituent republics within a loose federation called the Union of the Republics of Bosnia-Herzegovina. The federal government's role would be limited strictly to foreign policy and trade. But the Bosnian president withheld his approval of the map. Karadzic, whose forces controlled over 70% of Bosnia, offered approximately 25% of the territory to the Muslims, leaving 60% for Serbia and 15% for Croatia. Izetbegovic could not accept these percentages, and on 2 August, as the Serbs stepped up their bombardment of Sarajevo, he walked out of the negotiations.<sup>(76)</sup>

## NATO AIR STRIKES?

Despite the apparent breakthrough in negotiations, there was no lull in the fighting over the summer. What is more, UN troops escorting aid convoys came under increasing attack, underscoring the organization's impotence in Bosnia and the contempt of local forces for its authority. In light of these events, and the chronic shortfall in aid pledges from international

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(75) *Keesing's*, July 1993, p. 39563.

(76) "Letter dated 3 August from the Secretary-General Addressed to the President of the Security Council," S/26233, 3 August 1993.

donors, the UN High Commissioner for Refugees stated in Geneva on 8 July that "we are on the verge of disaster and collapse."<sup>(77)</sup> Stoltenberg suggested less than a week later that if "the present downward spiral continues it will be impossible for the UN to remain in Bosnia."<sup>(78)</sup>

Once again, the debate over military intervention heated up. In late July, after Bosnian Serbs shelled a French-staffed UN base in Sarajevo, President Clinton declared that US forces were ready to launch air strikes against Serb artillery positions "if asked" by the UN. Clinton even hinted that the Americans might act alone, although he quickly retracted this remark after protests from the UN. The French foreign minister, Alain Juppe, stated that NATO military aircraft should defend UN forces in accordance with Resolution 836.

On 3 August, as the noose around Sarajevo and other Muslim-held areas tightened,<sup>(79)</sup> NATO allies agreed to begin planning for possible air strikes against Serb forces to stop "wide-scale interference" with humanitarian assistance efforts. Diplomats in Brussels made it clear that such military action would be undertaken only at the request of the UN Secretary-General. On 9 August, a list of military targets was approved and NATO warned the Bosnian Serbs to lift the siege against Sarajevo "without delay." As usual, the Serbs did just enough to reduce the immediate threat of intervention. Serb forces that had occupied two strategic mountains overlooking Sarajevo were withdrawn, bringing Izetbegovic back to the bargaining table and removing the need for air strikes. However, the west warned the Serbs that renewed heavy shelling of Sarajevo or continued disruption of aid shipments would lead to military measures. Observers speculated that the Serbs would be unlikely to take such warnings seriously after so many empty threats in the past.

As usual, talk of air strikes provoked considerable debate. Some experts feared that military intervention at this stage of the conflict would encourage the Muslims to avoid peace negotiations. Lieutenant-General Francis Briquemont, commander of UN military forces

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(77) *Keesing's*, July 1993, p. 39564. See also "Information Notes on Former Yugoslavia," UNHCR, Office of the Special Envoy for former Yugoslavia, No. 8/93, 1 August 1993.

(78) *Keesing's*, July 1993, p. 39564.

(79) By the end of July, the ICRC estimated that of a pre-war population of about 400,000, at least 5-6,000 had been killed and 18,000 wounded in Sarajevo. *The Economist*, 31 July 1993, p. 44.



in Bosnia, and his chief of staff, Brigadier-General Vere Hayes of Britain, expressed the fears of many French, British and Canadian officials by suggesting that the raids would expose troops to the danger of reprisals. The Americans took exception to these comments, and the French commander of UN forces in the former Yugoslavia felt obliged to point out near the end of August that "there must be no doubt that, if conditions so warrant, General Briquemont will be willing to use this important military means which NATO is in a position to provide."<sup>(80)</sup>

## STALEMATE

Izetbegovic's return to the negotiating table in Geneva on 16 August produced a tentative agreement on the eventual demilitarization of Sarajevo and the establishment of an interim, two-year UN administration in the capital. As well, the Muslims were promised access to the Adriatic sea at Ploce in Croatia and to the River Sava by way of concrete "flyovers" traversing Serb-held territory.<sup>(81)</sup> But the Muslims were still unhappy with the map, which gave them 30% of Bosnia's territory compared to 52.5% for the Serbs and 17.5% for the Croats. They were also concerned that UN-protected corridors linking Muslim towns would be impossible to establish unless the Serbs relinquished territory, while no one was sure what would happen to those Muslims who were left behind in the Croat and Serb states. Would they be allowed to leave, and if so, would their safe passage be guaranteed? Was this a form of ethnic cleansing, aided and abetted by the UN? Because of these concerns, the Bosnian assembly voted unanimously to reject the agreement. The Croat and Serb assemblies, on the other hand, did not hesitate to endorse it.

When the negotiations resumed on 31 August, after a 10-day break, the Bosnian delegation presented new territorial demands. The Serbs agreed to widen to two miles a proposed corridor linking the Muslim enclaves of Srebrenica and Zepa with Gorazde. However, they refused to enlarge the Muslim enclave of Bihac and the Croats turned down the Muslim

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(80) *Economist Intelligence Unit*, Country Report, Bosnia, 3rd quarter 1993, p. 11.

(81) "Letter dated 20 August 1993 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council," S/26337, 20 August 1993.

request to have access to the Adriatic Sea at the port of Neum. The fulfilment of these demands would have given the Muslims control of 34% of Bosnian territory. The talks broke down once again, Karadzic threatening to leave the Muslims out of partition altogether. Owen proclaimed that "the greatest danger facing Bosnia-Herzegovina now is fragmentation, anarchy, warlords and chaos, and it's not that far away."<sup>(82)</sup>

Izetbegovic had still not given up hope that the international community would intervene. At the beginning of September, while visiting the US, he pleaded with President Clinton to launch air strikes against Serb positions in order to ensure the free movement of relief supplies. Although Clinton had stated on 2 September that the military option was still "very much alive," warning the Serbs and Croats not to seize more territory during a lull in the Geneva negotiations, he refused to set a deadline for the use of force if the Serbs continued to besiege Sarajevo. He insisted that the threat of air strikes "has to be part of the negotiating process."

On 16 September Izetbegovic, thwarted once again, accepted the dissolution of Bosnia and the legal possibility of secession for its Serb and Croat territories when state boundaries had been settled. But there was no progress on the proposed map. On 29 September the Bosnian parliament voted to accept the partition plan on the condition that "territory seized by force" was returned, which in effect amounted to rejection. There the talks remained until the end of 1993. In November France and Germany, in an attempt to break the stalemate, suggested that territorial concessions by Serbs should be rewarded by a gradual lifting of sanctions. But the Serbs would not take the bait and when talks resumed in December it was clear that the factions had resigned themselves to their second winter of fighting.

## CONCLUSION

In January 1992, Radovan Karadzic, the Bosnian Serb leader, predicted that war in Bosnia was unlikely to break out for the simple reason that "two or three hundred thousand people would die, cities would be destroyed and then we would still have to sit down and

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(82) *Facts on File*, 9 September 1993, p. 663.



negotiate the same things."<sup>(83)</sup> Karadzic, of course, assumed that common sense would prevail in the face of such horrible prospects. But it did not, and 20 months later his worst fears have been confirmed: the death toll is now estimated in the hundreds of thousands, cities have been devastated, and the three warring factions continue to haggle over the same minute details. While peace may be agonizingly close on paper (only a small percentage of territory separates the Serbs and Muslims) neither side seems willing to make any more concessions. The war shows every sign of dragging on interminably.

The Bosnian conflict has been an exercise in continual frustration for the outside world. Critics insist that the source of this frustration lies in the timid response of the international community itself, which they claim has allowed the fighting to rage out of control. Few would deny that the world has been cautious. First and foremost, western governments have identified no direct national interest at stake in the Balkans. With the end of the Cold War, the region has lost its strategic importance, and it possesses no vital resources upon which the west depends for its survival. At best, there has been a recognition that the war could not be allowed to spill over Bosnia's borders. There has also been a lack of international consensus on the nature of the Bosnian conflict. While there can be little doubt that Belgrade has played a prominent role in arming, financing and supporting the Bosnian Serbs, it is difficult to portray the war as a straightforward case of outside naked aggression against a defenceless country. The fighting in Bosnia bears a strong resemblance to a civil war, and while the Serbs have undoubtedly pursued their objectives with ruthless determination, it can also be argued that they had legitimate concerns over their fate in an independent Bosnia.

Because of these complexities, the international community has had great difficulty in agreeing on an appropriate strategy for dealing with the war. Public opinion has forced western governments gradually to adopt a more assertive role in trying to reduce the hardship of the Bosnian people and end the fighting, but each incremental step has been taken with a view to avoiding any open-ended commitment. The aim, critics charge, has been to appease public opinion while at the same time limiting the potential damage to the reputations of the international bodies that have been the main channels for outside involvement in the war. While

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(83) *The Economist*, 4 January 1992, p. 43.

the west has succeeded in avoiding any long-term commitment, especially in terms of military intervention, the reputations of the international bodies have suffered grievously.

This paper has examined the various attempts by the international community - from negotiation and sanctions to peacekeeping and military intervention - to stop the fighting or at least help the Bosnian people cope with the inhumanity of war. Success has been marginal at best. Negotiations conducted by the UN and EC aimed at reaching a political settlement have repeatedly failed. As the Vance-Owen plan demonstrated, trying to satisfy the rival claims of Serbs, Muslims and Croats has proved virtually impossible. The Serbs and Muslims in particular have dug in their heels from the outset and shown utter contempt for any form of compromise. Without a credible threat of force, there was never much hope for success. Western governments now concede that a single, multi-ethnic Bosnia, the goal of both the Muslim population and the Geneva peace conference, is no longer possible. Moreover, it is accepted that any new Serb and Croat states will eventually be absorbed into Serbia and Croatia proper.<sup>(84)</sup>

Political and economic pressure has had little effect on the progress of the fighting. Sanctions introduced by the UN and the EC have inflicted serious damage on the Serbian economy but have failed to end the war. The Bosnian Serbs, by all indications, remain well-stocked in weapons and oil, while debate continues to surround the degree of influence President Milosevic actually carries with Karadzic and his cohorts. The UN Security Council has approved a vast array of other threatening resolutions aimed at curbing the fighting - from the condemnation of detention camps and ethnic cleansing to the creation of war-crimes tribunals - but they have been routinely flouted by Bosnian Serb forces.<sup>(85)</sup>

The military option has provoked intense debate and led to a serious split within the western alliance. In the end, no consensus has been reached. Although the establishment and enforcement of a no-fly zone and the creation of safe areas in the spring of 1993 represented military interventions of a sort, the first was largely irrelevant and the second far from

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(84) Karadzic now admits that the goal of Greater Serbia has been present from the beginning of the conflict in Bosnia. See *Montreal Gazette*, 1 December 1993.

(85) *The Economist* has referred to these UN resolutions as "a murky brew of ambiguity and evasion." 12 June 1993, p. 18.



successful (critics continue to condemn safe areas for their alleged role in facilitating ethnic cleansing). Explicit military action against the Serbs has been avoided. No government has been willing to commit combat troops to a region where the national interest is hazy at best and where casualties would likely be heavy. Military intervention may have been possible at a reasonable cost early in the war, but the longer it was left the more difficult it became to carry out. With each successive western evasion, the Bosnian Serbs were led to believe that enforcement would become a reality only in the most extreme circumstances, if at all. They have become experts at gauging the limits of western patience.

Although the international community has eschewed military intervention, it could not in good conscience stand aside and watch the slaughter continue. Peacekeeping was the only option left. Although no one will deny that UN troops have done a remarkable job in Bosnia under extremely arduous conditions, it is difficult to call them "peacekeepers" in the true sense. Traditionally, peacekeepers have been deployed only when a durable cease-fire has been established. Without an agreed truce, peacekeepers, even if armed, become potential targets, and it is for this reason that Boutros-Ghali refused to dispatch a UN force to Bosnia for the first five months of 1992. But in the face of so much human suffering, some steps had to be taken. Despite the continued absence of any stable truce, peacekeepers were sent to Bosnia for what seemed at first an urgent and achievable job - breaking the siege of Sarajevo. But the tasks quickly multiplied, from taking control of heavy weapons to providing food and shelter to victims of war. Not only did the line between peacekeeping and peacemaking become blurred, but with Security Council Resolution 770, authorizing the use of force to protect aid convoys, the difference between peacekeeping and peace enforcement suddenly became cloudy also. With each new incident of harassment and abuse at the hands of local war-lords, experts have questioned whether peacekeepers are right for this type of duty. They are operating in a war zone with low-grade weapons and a vague mandate. To make matters worse, they have been hampered in their efforts by strained UN resources, a chaotic bureaucracy and an ongoing turf war between senior UN civilian and military officials.<sup>(86)</sup> The revelation that 11 Canadian peacekeepers were attacked by Serb gunmen in December has once again raised serious doubts

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(86) See MacKenzie, (1993) *passim*; *Toronto Star*, 3 December 1993.

about the UN presence in Bosnia. The governments of Canada, Britain, France and Spain are all considering pulling out their troops by the spring of 1994. They perhaps have in mind Lord Owen's admonishment that "there will come a moment when the world community will have to decide how long we can sustain intervention."<sup>(87)</sup>

The UN has not only been criticized for endangering the lives of peacekeepers, but also for responding to the violence in Bosnia by tackling its symptoms rather than its causes. Although humanitarian intervention has undoubtedly saved thousands of lives, it can also be argued that it is prolonging the war. Lord Owen commented in November 1993 that by "feeding the warriors we are interfering with the dynamics of war."<sup>(88)</sup> Maintaining vital supply lines into Sarajevo and other besieged towns has perhaps allowed soldiers from the various factions to remain in the field longer than would have been possible otherwise. The Muslims in particular might have capitulated by now had it not been for continued UN assistance. One aid official remarked in the fall of 1992 that "we are here to fatten the lambs for slaughter."<sup>(89)</sup> With increasing signs that the Muslims are determined to regain lost territory, the UN is faced with an urgent dilemma.

Finally, it can be argued that the same organization that engages in humanitarian relief should not be spearheading negotiations whose success requires some threat of force. In other words, peacemaking, peace enforcement and humanitarian relief may well be incompatible. The fact that the relief providers have become virtual hostages rules out such military options as air strikes, which the Americans have suggested on more than one occasion. The Serbs have exploited this inconsistency to their advantage.

While the UN has been severely criticized for its role in Bosnia, the European Community, the other key player in the international response to the war, has not emerged unscathed. Critics have argued that the EC failed early on to appreciate the intensity of the

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(87) *The Economist*, 20 November 1993. France has threatened to remove its peacekeepers before. In May 1993 it delivered an ultimatum to the United Nations, demanding that the UN clarify its role and improve its organization on the ground.

(88) *The Economist*, 15 November 1993.

(89) *EIU Country Report*, Bosnia, 3rd quarter 1993, p. 13.



passions dividing Bosnia's ethnic groups and their readiness to use violence. The EC's recognition of Bosnia in April 1992 perhaps underscores this failure. Since then, the Community has been accused of acting fitfully and issuing hollow threats. The separate and often conflicting policies pursued by European countries toward the war - in particular France, Great Britain and Germany - made the EC's response problematic. The advantages of the EC as a regional organization - its familiarity with the issues and participants - were offset by partisanship and local rivalries. The Serbs, for example, were always suspicious of the Germans, and came to view the EC's mediating role with less and less favour as time wore on. In the end, the political will needed to make the hardest decisions - checking Serb advances or enforcing a settlement - was not there. There is now considerable speculation that the EC, with its structural shortcomings, may not be ready to take custody of European security.<sup>(90)</sup>

The various regional security organizations that have jockeyed for possible peacekeeping and peace-enforcing roles have been at best peripheral players in the Bosnian crisis. NATO undoubtedly possesses the military capability and command structure to deal with Bosnia but it lacks any political consensus. It continues to experience problems shifting its focus from the Soviet menace to more obscure threats posed by ethnic nationalism. The WEU, championed by France throughout the crisis, not only lacks the political consensus but also its own military forces and command structure. It remains a nebulous body at best, unsure of its place in the emerging European union. Finally, the CSCE is just beginning to forge mechanisms to deal with instability in central and eastern Europe. As one critic suggested, it has been of "distinctly limited relevance" during the Bosnian war.<sup>(91)</sup>

Clearly, criticism of the international community for its handling of the Bosnian conflict has been bitter and widespread. Even those who helped frame the international response admit that mistakes have been made. One senior UN official stated bluntly in April 1993 that "we are in a quagmire. We did everything wrong from the start."<sup>(92)</sup> Still, it must be

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(90) See M. Brenner, "EC: Confidence Lost," *Foreign Policy*, Summer 1993, p. 29-32; Higgins, (1993), p. 473-5; Guicherd (1993), p. 159-81.

(91) A. Roberts, "Humanitarian War: Military Intervention and Human Rights," *International Affairs*, 69, No. 3, 1993, p. 443. See also Eyal (1993), p. 79; and Higgins (1993), p. 474.

(92) *The Economist*, 17 April 1993, p. 47.

remembered that the Bosnian crisis has been immensely complex and there could have been few if any simple solutions. Given that the Serbs and Muslims seem determined to destroy each other, the outside world has had to approach the fighting with limited options. But does this mean that the international community will be powerless to intervene in similar wars in future and that international disorder will rule the day? Have any lessons been learned that might provide hope for the future?

To begin with, Bosnia has demonstrated that the world's security structures are not prepared to deal with the type of violent ethnic nationalism that is rapidly becoming endemic in the post-Cold War world. The nation-state may no longer be the basic unit of international politics; conflict within states, rather than between them, has become the new threat to international security. New diplomatic and political mechanisms are needed to cope with the issues of sovereignty, self-determination, respect for national borders and the rights of minorities.<sup>(93)</sup> Throughout the Bosnian crisis the international community has demonstrated a nagging inconsistency in addressing these concepts. On a more fundamental level, the United Nations must establish guidelines as to when it should intervene in internal conflict and in what form, since it has traditionally avoided interfering in the internal affairs of sovereign states. Should it wait for peace to be established? If not, is humanitarian intervention the only alternative? Is peace enforcement a viable option? Where does one end and the other begin? If humanitarian intervention is to be pursued, traditional peacekeepers may not be the answer. Peace-enforcement units, as defined in Boutros-Ghali's *An Agenda for Peace*, may be an alternative.<sup>(94)</sup> Whatever the choice, it must be remembered that plunging into a domestic war with no clear objectives is to risk exacerbating an already difficult situation. Clearly, urgent debate on this entire question is required.<sup>(95)</sup>

Of course, it would be in everyone's interest if war could be prevented before it broke out. Timely preventive actions are "far easier and cheaper in political and human terms

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(93) See T. Deibel, "Internal Affairs and International Relations in the Post-Cold War World," *Washington Quarterly*, Summer 1993; Guicherd (1993), p. 178-81.

(94) *An Agenda for Peace*, S/24111, 17 June 1992, p. 13.

(95) See T. Weiss, "New Challenges for UN Military Operations: Implementing An Agenda for Peace," *Washington Quarterly*, Winter 1993, p. 51-66; J. Chopra and T. Weiss, "Sovereignty Is No Longer Sacrosanct: Codifying Humanitarian Intervention," *Ethics and International Affairs*, 6, 1992, p. 95-117; Roberts (1993), p. 442-44; Higgins (1993), p. 468-72; Goulding (1993), p. 459-63.



than efforts to try to stop or slow down fighting once it (has) begun."<sup>(96)</sup> Bosnia is perhaps a classic example. It has demonstrated in stark terms the need for better risk assessment and early policy formulation within UN and EC structures. Again, Boutros-Ghali's recommendations in the sphere of preventive diplomacy, especially the deployment of peacekeeping troops before fighting begins (as in Macedonia), merit serious consideration.<sup>(97)</sup>

Finally, the number of international organizations and individual governments engaged in the Bosnian crisis has been staggering. As Sir Anthony Parson has commented, "this multiplicity of cooks, working on a recipe which they are developing as they go along, requires very careful coordination and fuses can easily blow."<sup>(98)</sup> Decision-making has been fragmented, rivalries between competing organizations have emerged - for example, between the EC and UN in July 1992 - and useless duplication of effort has taken place. Steps must be taken to ensure that in future the responsibilities of organizations, particularly between the UN and regional bodies, are clearly defined.<sup>(99)</sup>

The United Nations, the European Community and other international organizations face a daunting task as they confront the new security risks of the post-Cold War world. But it must be remembered that these international bodies are almost by definition weak and slow. They make decisions on the basis of consensus and this takes time, especially when the issue is as complicated as the conflict in Bosnia. It must also be remembered that they are the instruments of nation-states - their success relies on the degree to which international cooperation complements national interests.<sup>(100)</sup> As Bosnia has demonstrated, if national interest cannot be identified, then the international community faces an uphill struggle.

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(96) P. Moore, "The Widening Warfare in the Former Yugoslavia," *RFE/RL Research Report*, 1 January 1993, p. 8.

(97) See *An Agenda for Peace*, p. 9. See also A. Parsons, "The United Nations in the Post-Cold War Era," *International Relations*, December 1992, p. 196; Hagman (1993), p. 18-37.

(98) Parsons (1993), p. 197.

(99) See Boutros Boutros-Ghali, "Setting a New Agenda for the United Nations," *Journal of International Affairs*, Winter 1993, p. 296; *An Agenda for Peace*, p. 18; Remington (1993), p. 369; Higgins (1993), p. 475.

(100) See K. Holmes, "New World Disorder: A Critique of the United Nations," *Journal of International Affairs*, Winter 1993, p. 324.















